The Cleveland Museum of Art
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News Release

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Spain's Most Popular Flamenco Singer Makes Ohio Debut at The Cleveland Museum of Art on Feb. 6

"Great emotional blasts of sound… the elemental emotional beauty he conjured was easily enough to justify his headlining status." — BBC

CLEVELAND (Jan. 21, 2004) — The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) presents the Ohio debut of Spain's most successful flamenco singer, José Mercé, on **Friday, Feb. 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium.** This concert is part of the Museum's acclaimed VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts.

Admission to the performance is $35 and $31; $31 and $28 for CMA members. Tickets are available by calling 216-421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033, or online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

Mercé is known for his electrifying performances that have sold out stadiums in Spain. His limitless talents have earned him the highest awards of his native Spain and his recordings with Virgin Records have surpassed the double platinum status. His company features the brilliant Moraito, one of flamenco's most revered guitarists.

Mercé's introduction to music came at the age of six when he was a choirboy at his local church, Basílica de la Mercéd. By the age of 12, he was overcome with the urge to sing flamenco and was invited to perform in Manuel Morao's "Los Jueves Flamencos" and the following year moved to Madrid and stayed with relatives while he began recording with and accompanying some of Spain's biggest names in flamenco. This accelerated his early rise to stardom and Mercé became Spain's hottest rising singer on the flamenco scene before the age of 18.

After appearing in two movies, *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding) in 1981 and *Flamenco* in 1995, Mercé found his career shifting to incorporate his flamenco style songs. He recorded an album under the direction of Manuel Sánchez Pernía, began receiving top billing in the festivals of southern Spain and winning numerous awards. His enormous talent now recognized, Mercé accepted a recording contract with Virgin records and in 1998 recorded his first album, *Del Amanecer,* in collaboration with the Grammy Award winning composer/guitarist Vicente Amigo. His latest album, *Lío*, was released in Oct. 2002 and debuted at number eight on Billboard's Spanish charts.

The next performance in the VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts will be **Tango for Valentine** featuring a return appearance by **Ensemble Avantango, on Friday, Feb. 20, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium**. Showcasing some of the world's leading tango musicians and dancers, Ensemble Avantango's performances sizzle with raw and feisty energy. Tickets are available for $28 and $25; $26 and $23 for CMA members by calling (216) 421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or buying online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

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The Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The Museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the Museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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